

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL NO. 303

93RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATORS DOUGHERTY, DAYS, WHEELER, COLEMAN, WILSON AND BRAY.

Read 1st time February 3, 2005, and ordered printed.

TERRY L. SPIELER, Secretary.

1395S.01I

AN ACT

To amend chapter 565, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to the creation of a death penalty commission.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 565, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 565.043, to read as follows:

565.043. 1. A commission on the death penalty is hereby created within the office of administration to consist of ten members: two members from the house of representatives with one from each party (the majority party member shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and the minority party member shall be appointed by the minority floor leader); two members from the senate, one from each party (the majority party member shall be appointed by the president pro tem and the minority party member shall be appointed by the minority floor leader); a criminal defense lawyer and a county prosecutor appointed by the board of governors of The Missouri Bar; the state public defender or his or her designee; the attorney general or his or her designee; a murder victim's family member and a family member of an individual on death row appointed by the director of the department of corrections. Representation on the commission shall be balanced with the various viewpoints on the death penalty equally represented. The members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but the members shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the work of the commission. The commission shall be appointed and staffed on or before December 1, 2005.

2. The commission on the death penalty shall elect a chair. The commission shall be assisted in its work by the staff of the Missouri supreme court and the personnel and staff of the state public universities.

3. The commission on the death penalty shall hold public hearings throughout the state, calling before it witnesses to testify and allowing other interested citizens to comment on issues relevant to the administration of the death penalty in Missouri.

4. The commission shall study all aspects of the death penalty as administered in the state. As part of this study, the commission on the death penalty shall review and analyze all cases in which the death penalty was sought and use a scientific method of random sampling to review and analyze a statistical representation of cases in which charges of first degree murder, second degree murder, or voluntary manslaughter were filed on or after January 1, 1977. The sampling shall have geographic representation across the state based on population distribution. Such review and analyses shall examine all available data concerning:

(1) The facts of the offense including mitigating and aggravating circumstances;

(2) The county in which the charges were filed;

(3) The charges originally filed;

(4) The crime for which the defendant was convicted, or to which the defendant entered a plea of guilty or for which the defendant was tried and acquitted;

(5) The sentence imposed;

(6) The age, race, gender, religious preference, and economic status of the defendant and the victim;

(7) Whether evidence exists that the defendant was mentally retarded or mentally ill or both;

(8) Whether the defendant had a prior criminal record and detailing that record if one exists;

(9) The identity, number, and experience level of defense counsel at trial, appeal, and post conviction;

(10) The identity, number, and experience level of trial and appellate prosecutors, including, where appropriate, members of the

staff of the attorney general;

(11) The results of any appellate review;

(12) The results of any post-conviction review in state or federal court; and

(13) The cost per disposition and implementation of sentence. A cost analysis shall include comparison costs, both direct and indirect, born by county and state governments in the prosecution and defense of the defendant in all homicide cases where a death sentence was sought and in at least an equal number of homicide cases where a death sentence was not sought.

5. In considering the experience level of attorneys and the adequacy of resources as described in subdivisions (9) and (10) of subsection 4 of this section, the commission shall consider the experience and training levels required by the Missouri supreme court, the experience and training levels required by the courts and legislatures of other jurisdictions in which the death penalty is imposed, and the recommendations of national associations.

6. The review conducted by the commission shall include all such charges filed during the study period.

7. The commission shall report its findings and recommendations regarding the death penalty, including remedies for any deficiencies found by the commission, to the governor, members of the legislature, and the Missouri supreme court by January 1, 2009.

8. The commission shall make recommendations for amendments to the statutes and court rules pertaining to cases in which the death penalty is sought or imposed to provide assurances that:

(1) Defendants who are sentenced to death are in fact guilty of first degree murder;

(2) Defendants in cases in which the death penalty is sought are provided adequate and experienced counsel and adequate resources for the defense of their cases at trial and at the appellate and post-conviction stages;

(3) Race does not play an impermissible role in determining which defendants are sentenced to death;

(4) Appellate and post-conviction procedures are adequate to provide a fair opportunity for the courts of this state to correct errors

and injustices that occurred at trial in cases in which the death penalty is imposed, including but not limited to allowing access to physical evidence for later testing and analysis; and

(5) All prosecutors throughout the state use similar criteria to determine whether to seek the death penalty in a case involving criminal homicide.

9. No execution of a defendant shall take place between the effective date of this section and January 1, 2009.

10. During the moratorium period, the special procedures in cases of first degree murder provided in sections 565.030 to 565.040 and any other proceedings related to capital cases, including motions for post-conviction relief, shall continue to be operative and shall proceed as if no such moratorium were in place, except that no day certain for execution shall be appointed that falls during the moratorium.

Unofficial

T

Bill

Copy